

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
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November 12, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

Over the last several weeks, the world's leading scientific organizations have released a stream of reports about the dangers of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in September that warming of the climate system is “unequivocal” and scientists can now state with 95% confidence that “human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.”<sup>1</sup> This is the same level of confidence that scientists have about smoking causing cancer.

A leaked draft of an upcoming IPCC report found that climate change will result in a higher risk of food insecurity and reduced agricultural productivity, as well as increased risks from sea-level rise, coastal flooding, storm surges, drought, extreme precipitation, and heat waves. Last week, the United Nations Environment Programme reported that, unless carbon pollution emissions are significantly reduced by 2020, “the world will have to rely on more difficult, costlier and riskier means after 2020 of keeping the global average temperature increase

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis* (Sept. 27, 2013).

The Honorable Fred Upton  
The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
November 12, 2013  
Page 2

below 2° C.”<sup>2</sup> The next day, the World Meteorological Association announced that the amount of carbon pollution in the atmosphere reached a new record high in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

And on November 8, 2013, nature may have sent the strongest warning of all. A massive typhoon struck the Philippines. With 150 mile-per-hour winds and “tsunami-like walls of water,” “the super-typhoon left trees splintered on the streets, bodies festering in open view, and desperate towns short of food and water.”<sup>4</sup> Approximately 10% of the country’s population was directly affected. In the city of Tacloban alone, 10,000 people are feared dead. After viewing the devastation from the air, Marine Brigadier General Paul Kennedy said, “I don’t believe there is a single structure that is not destroyed or severely damaged in some way – every single building, every single house.”<sup>5</sup> Electricity and communications have not yet been restored in the affected provinces.

Scientists are still analyzing the relationship between hurricanes and typhoons and climate change, but many believe that unchecked climate change will increase the severity of the worst storms. Dr. Kerry Emanuel, an atmospheric scientist at MIT, told the *New York Times*, “As you warm the climate, you basically raise the speed limit on hurricanes.”<sup>6</sup> Dr. James Kossin of the National Climatic Data Center said, “The data suggest that things like this will be more frequent with global warming.”<sup>7</sup> According to the IPCC, it is “more likely than not” that climate change will result in increases in intense tropical cyclone activity during this century.<sup>8</sup> The IPCC also found that there is a greater than 90% likelihood that climate change will result in higher sea levels, which worsen storm surges.

Yet this Committee is ignoring these risks. We are proceeding in a scientific vacuum. You have rejected our repeated requests for hearings that would inform the Committee about the

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<sup>2</sup> United National Environment Programme, *The Emissions Gap Report 2013* (Nov. 5, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> World Meteorological Organization, *Press Release: Greenhouse Gas Concentrations in Atmosphere Reach New Record* (Nov. 6, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> *Relief is slow to reach victims of Philippine typhoon; looters steal medical supplies*, The Washington Post (Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Typhoon in Philippines Casts Long Shadow over U.N. Talks on Climate Treaty*, The New York Times, (Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis* (Sept. 27, 2013).

The Honorable Fred Upton  
The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
November 12, 2013  
Page 3

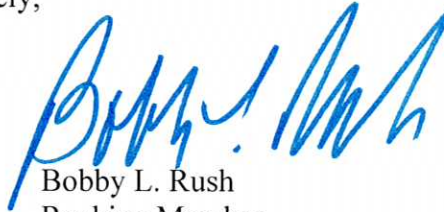
dangers of climate change. Instead, you have scheduled a hearing on Thursday to consider legislation whose premise is that nothing needs to be done to address climate change.

We urge you to take a different approach. If a hurricane like Typhoon Haiyan had struck the United States, the damage would be incalculable, just as it apparently is in the Philippines. Rather than holding hearings on proposals to block action on climate change, we ask you to hold a hearing with the world's leading experts on the relationship between extreme storms like Typhoon Haiyan and climate change.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and  
Power